

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A device for filling a container with a plurality of objects standing substantially upright on a floor portion of the container, the device comprising:

a depositing cavity temporarily created and maintained in the container for receiving one of the plurality of objects;

a first moveable planar restraining member having a first anterior surface facing the depositing cavity and a first posterior surface, the first posterior surface restraining a previously deposited object against movement; [[and]]

a second moveable planar restraining member having a second anterior surface facing the depositing cavity and a second posterior surface;

a first arm for repositioning the first restraining member from a position on a first side of the one of the objects to a new restraining position on an opposing second side of the one of the objects after the one of the objects is deposited into the depositing cavity;

a second arm for maintaining the second restraining member in a position for guiding the one of the objects during deposition into the depositing cavity and maintaining the deposited object in a deposited position while the first restraining member is being repositioned;

wherein the depositing cavity is defined in an object receiving configuration by the first and second anterior surfaces, the floor portion of the container, and opposing side walls of the container,

wherein the first and second restraining members are at least partially defined by a comb-like structure including successive teeth and gaps, the first and second restraining members being arranged in a manner such that the teeth of the first restraining member are aligned in a plane with the gaps between the teeth of the second restraining member, thereby allowing the first and second restraining members to interleave as the first restraining member moves to the new restraining position on the opposing second side of the one of the objects, and

wherein the first and second restraining members are operationally arranged to be removably insertable into and between the opposing side walls of the container[[, and]]

~~wherein after one of the plurality of objects is deposited into the depositing cavity, the first restraining member is movable from a position on a first side of one of the plurality of objects to a new restraining position on an opposing second side of one of the plurality of objects, and the second restraining member is movable away from the first restraining member to create a new depositing cavity.~~

2-5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the surfaces of the first restraining member are treated to reduce their coefficient of friction.

7. (Currently amended) The device of claim 1, wherein the first restraining member is ~~mounted on a moveable articulated arm and is pivotally connected to the first arm such that a centre of gravity of the first restraining member is substantially directly beneath a centre line of a pivot.~~

8. (Previously presented) The device of claim 1, wherein in the object receiving configuration, the first restraining member is actively biased such that the first posterior surface acts to place the previously deposited objects under compression, sufficient to prevent relative movement amongst the plurality of objects.

9. (Currently amended) The device of claim 8, wherein the compression may be ~~released~~ reduced immediately prior to a withdrawal of the first restraining member from the container.

10. (Currently amended) The device of claim 1, wherein in the object receiving configuration, the first and second restraining members are disposed within the container such that their lower extremities are positioned adjacent to the floor portion of the filled container, which represents substantially ~~[[a]]~~ the final position of the plurality of objects in the container, thereby ~~obviating~~ reducing any requirement for the deposited objects to be subsequently repositioned.

11. (Currently amended) The device of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 10, wherein in the object receiving configuration, the first and second restraining members are disposed within

the container such that the depositing cavity tends to taper inward toward the floor portion of the container.

12. (Currently amended) The device of claim ~~[[11]]~~ 1, wherein in the object receiving configuration, at least one of the first and second restraining members is arranged to allow a pivoting movement of its lower extremity away from the other of the first and second restraining members, and

wherein a bias against the pivoting movement is provided such that a braking force may be exerted on the object falling into the depositing cavity, while allowing the depositing cavity to expand to accommodate the object.

13. (Previously presented) The device of claim 12, wherein both the first and second restraining members are arranged to allow the pivoting movement of their lower extremities away from each other, and

wherein a bias against the pivoting movement is provided to both the first and second restraining members.

14. (Previously presented) The device of claim 12, wherein the bias is provided by a spring-loading mechanism.

15. (Currently amended) The device of claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, wherein during an insertion of the first restraining member through the second restraining member, a cradle is formed between the first and second anterior surfaces of the first and second restraining members, respectively, to catch and hold one of the plurality of objects.

16. (Currently amended) The device of claim 1, wherein the plurality of objects fall into the depositing cavity solely via ~~[[a]]~~ force of gravity.

17. (Previously presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the plurality of objects are relatively stiff, and
wherein the first posterior surface of said first restraining member contacts an upper portion of the previously deposited objects to restrain them against movement.

18-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended) A method of depositing ~~[[the]]~~ a plurality of objects into ~~[[the]]~~ a container, ~~including the steps of~~ the method comprising:

positioning the container in a filling position relative to ~~the device according to~~
~~claim 1~~ a device for depositing the plurality of objects, the device including first and
second moveable planar restraining members at least partially defined by a comb-like
structure including successive teeth and gaps, the first and second restraining members
being arranged in an interleaving manner;

inserting the first and second restraining members into the container in ~~[[the]]~~ an object receiving configuration to create ~~[[the]]~~ a depositing cavity for receiving the plurality of objects;

dropping one of the plurality of objects into the depositing cavity;

withdrawing the first restraining member from the container while the second restraining member maintains restraint of the previously deposited object;

reinserting the first restraining member into the container ~~such that it takes up the~~ in a new restraining position on ~~[[the]]~~ an opposing second side of one of the plurality of objects to restrain both the most recently deposited object and all previously deposited objects from relative movement with respect to the container floor;

~~moving~~ repositioning the container and all the previously deposited objects by actuating movement of the second ~~first~~ restraining member away from the first restraining member to the object receiving configuration to at least partially create ~~[[the]]~~ a new depositing cavity;

repeating the above cycle until the container is filled;

withdrawing the first and second restraining members from the container;

removing the filled container from the filling position; and

repeating the above sequence.

22-28. (Canceled)

29. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the depositing cavity is tapered inward toward the lower extremities of the first and second restraining members.

30. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein when the first and second restraining members are withdrawn from the container, the first and second restraining members are arranged in the interleaving manner above an upper level of the container for catching and holding the one of the plurality of objects above the upper level of the container.

31. (New) The device of claim 7, wherein the second restraining member is pivotally connected to the second arm.

32. (New) The device of claim 31, wherein a centre of gravity of the second restraining member is substantially directly beneath the centre-line of the pivot.

33. (New) The device of claim 31, wherein the first and second arms raise the first and second restraining members, respectively, above an upper level of the container in an interleaving arrangement to form a cradle for catching and holding one of the plurality of objects above the upper level of the container.

34. (New) The device of claim 11, wherein an actuator displaces a bottom edge portion of the second restraining member toward a bottom edge portion of the first restraining member to create the tapered depositing cavity.

35. (New) The device of claim 34, wherein the actuator provides the second restraining member with a force for restraining previously deposited objects in the depositing cavity while the first arm is being repositioned.

36. (New) The device of claim 34, wherein the actuator provides the second restraining member with a force for displacing the container and previously deposited objects by a distance to at least partially create a new depositing cavity.

37. (New) The device of claim 7, wherein a center of gravity of the first restraining member is substantially directly beneath a centre-line of the pivot.

38. (New) The device of claim 1, further comprising:
a freely pivoting plate attached to the upper posterior surface of the second restraining member.